

*EUONYMUS KANYAKUMARIENSIS* - A NEW SPECIES  
OF CELASTRACEAE FROM INDIA<sup>1</sup>

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*Euonymus kanyakumariensis* (Celastraceae), a new species resembling *E. pendulus* Wall. from the Mahendragiri Hills in the Western Ghats of Tamil Nadu is described and illustrated.

**Key words:** Celastraceae, *Euonymus kanyakumariensis* sp. nov., *E. pendulus*, Mahendragiri, Western Ghats, Tamil Nadu

### INTRODUCTION

*Euonymus* L. (c. 177 species) of Celastraceae, found in Tropical and subtropical Asia and America, is estimated to have 32 species in India (Lawson 1872; Gamble 1918; Blakelock 1951; Ramamurthy 2000). According to Ramamurthy (1983), 6 species are recorded in Tamil Nadu and 4 from the Tirunelveli Hills (both Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari districts). Botanical collections (1996-2000) from the Tirunelveli Hills at the southernmost end of the Western Ghats, India, yielded a taxon very different from the previously known Indian species of *Euonymus* L. It is described here as a new species.

*Euonymus kanyakumariensis* C. Murugan and V.S. Manickam sp. nov. (Fig. 1) *E. pendulo* Wall. arte affinis, sed foliis ad marginem integris (in ille serratis), petiolis c. 0.5 cm longis (in ille 2-3 cm longis), stipulis glabris (in ille hirsutis), sepalis ad marginem integris (in ille fimbriatis), staminibus petalis curtioribus (in ille longioribus) et lobis capsularum 5, integris, non alatis (in ille 3-4, acute / angulatis et alatis) differt.

**Type:** India, Tamil Nadu, Kanyakumari district, Mahendragiri Hills, on the way to Parvatham, c. 1,400 m, 28.iii.1999. C. Murugan 18741 (Holotype: XCH; Isotype XCH and MH).

Shrub - small tree, c. 3 m tall; branchlets obscurely 4-angular; internodes 2-6 cm long. Leaves decussate, rarely ternate, elliptic-oblong, 3-7 x 1.5-3 cm, membranous, base acute, margin entire, recurved, apex obtusely acute; nerves 5-7 pairs, obscure above, prominent beneath; petioles up to 5 mm long, hemispherical; stipules glabrous. Inflorescence axillary, of dichotomously branched cymes, to c. 6 cm long; peduncles 3-4 cm long. Flowers 7-9, c. 1.5 cm diameter, bisexual, 5-merous, actinomorphic; pedicels 5-10 mm long, slender; bracts subulate, 1-2 mm long, sub-persistent. Sepals 5,

imbricate in bud, subequal, sub-orbicular, 2-3 mm diameter, persistent, entire at margin. Petals 5, orbicular, 3-4 mm diameter, greenish-purple, base slightly clawed, margin crispate, apex rounded. Stamens 5, opposite to sepals, shorter than petals; filaments obscure; anthers 2-celled, deltoid. Disc flat, 5-lobed. Ovary 1-2 mm long, 5-celled, immersed in disc; ovules 2 in each, collateral; style subulate; stigma simple, acute. Capsule obcordate, c. 2 x 1.5 cm, pink, apex retuse, base acute; lobes 5, towards base, obtuse; seeds 5-10, c. 7.5 mm long, brown to black, yellow arillate.

**Ecology:** Rare in evergreen forests at c. 1,400 m.

**Fl. & Fr.:** March.

**Distribution:** Known only from Mahendragiri Hills of Kanyakumari district, southern Western Ghats, India.

**Etymology:** The species is named after the type locality: Kanyakumari district, southern Western Ghats, India.

Note: This new species differs from *Euonymus pendulus* Wallich as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Comparison of *Euonymus pendulus* Wallich and *E. kanyakumariensis* sp. nov.

Character state	<i>E. pendulus</i> Wall.	<i>E. kanyakumariensis</i> sp. nov.
Leaf margin	serrate	entire
Petioles	2-3 cm long	up to 0.5 cm long
Stipules	hairy	glabrous
Sepals' margin	fimbriate	entire
Petals	white	greenish-purple
Stamens	as long as petals	shorter than petals
Capsules	3-4 lobed, sharply angular, winged	5 lobed, entire, not winged

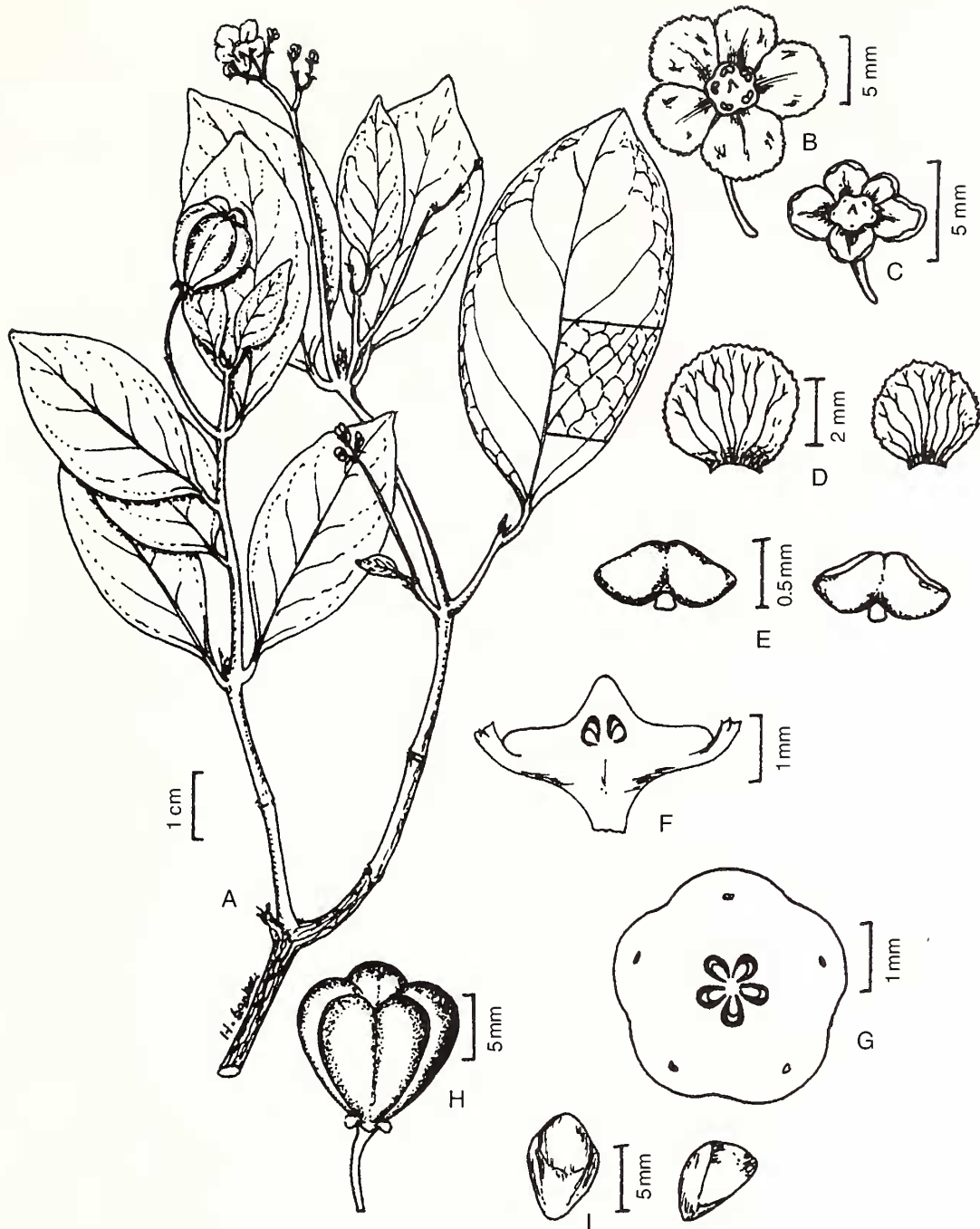


Fig. 1: *Euonymus kanyakumariensis* sp. nov.  
 A. Twig; B. Flower; C. Calyx; D. Petals; E. Stamens; F-G. Ovary (l.s and c.s.);  
 H. Capsule; I. Seed

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NEW DESCRIPTIONS

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